

FOR SWEET CHARITY

Sad Romance of a Beautiful Philadelphia Girl.

ABOUT THE BRAZILIAN ADAM.

Novel Feature of a Strange Disease—Yellow Fever Notes—Santa Casa da Misericordia.

Two IN JANUARY, April 30.—(Special correspondence of THE SUNDAY HERALD.)—A Sister of Charity died the other day in the great Misericordia hospital of this city, whose true name, if given here, would be recognized by many of our readers and whose brief life (she was barely thirty), was a remarkable blending of romance and tragedy. But since she kept her secret so well—desiring nothing kinder of fate than that her former identity should be lost under the cap and gown of a Sister of Mercy, which she had worn through seven busy years—I am not at liberty to tell you much of her story. Only this: Ten years ago she was the petted darling of one of the most aristocratic families in Philadelphia—the daughter of wealthy parents who yet resided in that city—beautiful, accomplished, gay and charming. Like many another, her bright young life was wrecked by heaven's oblique blessing—prevented a career, she loved, and, finally, not too well, and clinging to the object of her choice despite the protests of her friends.

THE DREAM WAS SHORT.

She awoke to find herself the victim of a pretended marriage, her supposed husband a brigand and forger, who is now serving a sentence in prison. Overwhelmed with shame and sorrow, she resorted to the world and sought refuge in the sheltering arms of the church. As a Sister of Charity she was sent to Brazil during the fever epidemic of seven years ago, and remained until the day of her death a humble nurse in the hospital at Rio.

Everyone who has visited the "Santa Casa da Misericordia" in recent years must have noticed this quiet, but zealous young sister, whose lovely face and figure even the ugly hands of the order could not disguise, because she was so different from the rest of the Sisters, being the only one among them of purely Anglo-Saxon blood. Struck by her appearance the first time I came to the place as a sight-seer, I addressed her in English; and in course of time a friendly relation, as close as the restrictions of the stern order would allow between a nun and a wanderer from the far-away world which she had long since renounced—disaster, perhaps, because the kindly Mother Superior was aware that death had marked the Sister for her own. During the hours spent at the bedside of the dying girl, I learned to appreciate to the fullest extent the holy lives of self-sacrificed by the gentle Sisterhood in all parts of the world where suffering and sorrow exist, and also the wonderful something of the beneficent work of

THE SISTERHOOD.

We would not like to be classed with that imaginative servant who was discovered crying aloud in the kitchen and was finally induced to explain the cause of her grief—that the thought occurred to her when she looked into the oven, "What if she should get married some day and should have a dear little baby, and it should crawl in there and be baked to death?"—but I do want to impress upon you that should you ever come to Rio de Janeiro and happen to fall ill, no matter how serious, your very wisest course would be to get yourself conveyed with all possible speed to the Santa Casa da Misericordia. Few cities in the world are better provided with houses of refuge for sick people than Rio, and none need them more. Wealthy Brazilians do their utmost to assist exclusively through the various "Irmandades" (brotherhoods), in whose charge are all the hospitals and asylums.

THE IRMANDADES.

are not unlike the benevolent societies of the United States, except that these are as much religious as the others, and are more unhealed than that of the north. They are usually composed of laymen, and are known as "third orders," for example the Order of Terceira da Misericordia, the Order of Terceira do Bom Jesus, the Order of Terceira da Boa Sorte, etc. The brothers wear a peculiar style of dress approaching the clerical, though the members are laymen, some distinguished men. To become a member of one of these orders, a liberal entrance fee is required, and afterwards an annual subscription. The members being entitled to support in sickness or old age, from the general fund, and a funeral of ceremony when dead. And the Irmandades, in return for numerous pecuniary contributions to the church and the support of churches, provide for the sick, bury the dead, and support masses for the repose of souls. Many of these orders have become enormously rich in the past years, through donations and legacies, and membership in them is eagerly sought. Chief among the brotherhoods is that of Santa Misericordia, in whose hands have been placed the principal charitable offices of the city, and which has received so many valuable bequests as to be able to support large numbers of the poor and some of the best hospitals and asylums in the world. It was founded as early as 1501, and has always been granted exceptional favors from the church, from papal bulls, the privilege of receiving the reversion of all unfulfilled legacies. The state also gives it the products of three or four annual lotteries besides port and other taxes. Thus the "Santa Casa da Misericordia" has come to own houses and lands in every part of the city and to enjoy an annual income of at least a million dollars. Besides maintaining in the best possible manner the enormous Hospital de Misericordia, (at an annual cost of about \$300,000), it also supports three branch hospitals, the Pedro II. leprosy asylum, two orphan asylums, a foundling's home, two large cemeteries, and the exclusive monopoly of all the internments made in the Brazilian capital, except those of British subjects, who are consigned to Gamboa, in which the bodies of Protestants of whatever nationality are generally buried.

THE SANTA CASA DA MISERICORDIA.

is beautifully situated near the seashore, under the brow of Castle Hill, on the spot where that celebrated Jesuit, Padre Jose Anchieta, built the first hospital in Brazil, away back in 1532. About that time Spanish armadas of sixteen war vessels arrived in the port having on board 3,000 Spaniards bound for the straits of Magellan. They had suffered severely from smallpox and nearly the whole number were sick on board. Anchieta, who was at that time valuing the old college of his order, whose members still, in the city of Rio de Janeiro, were moved by compassion for the dying seamen to make arrangements for their relief, and in so doing laid the foundation of an institution which has alleviated an incalculable amount of human suffering. During the 150 years since that day how many hundreds of thousands have found an asylum within the "Holy House"—how many tens of thousands a grave!

A BRAZILIAN ADAM.

Speaking of Padre Anchieta, I lately came across a volume, printed in Lisbon about the time of the good father's death, which attributes to him some remarkable things. It was written by Simon Vasquez, called, authorized historian of the province of Brazil, and its publication was duly licensed by the various censurers of the Portuguese press. Among other startling statements, it declares Anchieta to have been the second Adam. "Because it was expected that as there had been an Adam in the old world, there should be one in the new, to be the head of all the inhabitants and to have authority over the elements and animals of America, such as the first Adam possessed in Paradise." The little book goes on to state

that "Domillon was given him. (Anchieta), over the elements and all that dwell therein. The earth brought forth its plants, and even gave up the dead, that they might be restored to life and receive baptism at his hands. The birds of the air formed a canopy over his head to shade him from the sun. Fleets came into his port when he required them. The wild beasts of the forests attended him on his journeys and served him as an escort. Wind and waves obeyed his voice. Fire, at his pleasure, kindled the fires which it had done, so that bread which had been burnt to a cinder in the oven was drawn out white and soft by his interference. His barrel-club was a cure for all diseases of the head.

HE WAS A VICE-CHRIST.

yet such was his humanity that he called himself a vile mortal and an ignorant sinner. Any one of his disciples (white shirts) was an efficacious remedy against impure thoughts. Water poured over his bones worked more than two hundred miracles in Pernambuco and more than a thousand in Southern Brazil, and a few drops of it turned water into wine, as at the marriage in Galilee.

SOME OF THE MIRACLES ARE COMMENDED AS BEING MORE FANCIFUL AND

IN MORE ELEGANT TASTE

than those which are recorded in the scriptures.

The closing sentence is especially rich. But notwithstanding the supernatural powers of Padre Anchieta his hospital was very poor, having neither drainage nor ventilation, and directly overhanging the old city burial ground, of which patients in their beds had a perpetual view, and needed no further moments' work suggestions from their spiritual advisers. Its accommodations being totally inadequate, the directors, early in the present century, determined to remove the cemetery to Ponta da Cruz, and to build a new hospital on its site.

THE CORNER STONE

of the present magnificent edifice was laid in 1850, but it took thirty years to build it, and 4,000,000 milreis. It is of granite and marble, of a style high, forming a rectangular parallelogram and covering an area of 10,000 square metres. Nothing less than an especial visit can give one an adequate idea of its magnitude and completeness. The floor are of native woods, polished and oiled; the walls—containing of grey colored tiles. There is a splendid marble-veined entrance hall, a still more splendid reception room, and a gorgeous "saloon of the Emperor," where business meetings are held. The dispensary and chemical laboratory form a very large department, as a daily average of five hundred people, not including the hospital patients, are supplied, gratis, with medicine and advice. There is an operating room, with an amphitheater of seats for attending medical students, an instrument room, a chapel, dissection vault, a dead house, and of course the usual complement of store-rooms, kitchen, reception rooms, private apartments for the officers, nurses, etc., and everywhere the most scrupulous cleanliness is apparent, as well as the most perfect order and discipline.

CAPACITY OF THE BUILDING.

The vast building seems to be all halls and doors and windows, as is necessary in so hot a climate. Some of the patients, lying in their beds, can look out upon the beautiful flower gardens and waving palms of the inner courtyard, and others have incomparable views of the loveliest bay in the world and the dim peaks beyond. The total capacity of the building is 1,300 patients, and its statistics show that it receives from 12,000 to 15,000 every year. Besides the twenty-five wards, each of which contain thirty-two beds, there are a great many private rooms for the reception of those patients who are able to pay for special attendance. For such the exceedingly moderate price is \$1.50 per day for private room, medicine, constant attendance of skilled nurses and gratuitous services of the best physicians in the city.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE DISTRICT.

The doors of "Santa Casa" are open day and night for the reception of the distressed, and the most reliable recommendation to be admitted. There are wards for women and children as well as for men; and black and white, Christian, heathen and heretic, receive alike the very best assistance within the power of its managers to bestow. Few nations of the earth are not represented among its patients, and especially numerous are American and English seamen. No sort of distinction is made, beyond that of race and color, and one sees black faces and white, yellow faces and brown, lying side by side.

THE INTERNAL SUPERVISION

of the Misericordia is in the capable hands of a Mother Superior and her flock of "Sisters." Each nun has charge of a certain number of patients, and most of them are old, wrinkled and care-worn, some coarse and hard-featured, a few younger and more attractive—yet all are faithful to see to their wretched devotion to the helpless, their lives of unrequited toil for the good of strangers. I am sorry to say that the hospital statistics show that at least two-thirds of all who are admitted die; but that is not a large average, considering the deadliness of the climate to foreigners and the fact that were it not for the probable and grave danger of yellow fever, the frightful scourge of Rio, resembling the cholera in India in this respect, that it may be perfectly cured in one day, and only one dead, but buried the next. 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